

Spring Trips



The All-Stars will be making their way around the Eastern United States this spring as we've planned for a few more trips and guest appearances for our flagship ensemble. Elizabeth City, NC loves the All-Stars

and we're making yet another appearance there—this time in a joint performance with the Elizabeth City State Jazz ensemble on April 7th. We're also going to be driving all the way up to Delaware to participate in a steel drum festival hosted by the University of Delaware. Last but not least, we will be out in Fauquier County, VA to appear alongside the Fauquier County Falcons. As always, when July rolls around, the All-Stars will make their way to Morgantown, WV to learn from the best at the Mannette Festival of Steel.



The Rhythm Project

The Rhythm Project is a world percussion ensemble dedicated to the nurturing of self-esteem through individual and cooperative achievement. Founded in 1996, the program was started in Portsmouth, VA by the Virginia Arts Festival. There are four elementary and three middle school Rhythm Project programs that feed the program's premiere performing ensemble, the All-Stars. The All-Stars is a year-round program for high school students that focuses on instilling discipline and dedication in students through performance and touring opportunities. Additionally, two high school programs complete the family of ten Rhythm Project ensembles that serve the cities of Norfolk, Virginia Beach and Portsmouth.

The All-Stars, 2009 and 2010 Virginia International PANFest Grand Champions, have earned international acclaim and collaborated with many prominent artists. They have opened for Gladys Knight, shared the stage with pan artist Victor Provost and the Metropolitan Jazz Orchestra, and performed at the Royal Nova Scotia and Virginia International Tattoos. In May 2014, the group was featured on NPR's "From the Top" program showcasing outstanding talent in high school students.

www.RhythmProject.org



Sponsors

The *Rhythm Project* is supported in part by Bank of America, Batten Educational Achievement Fund of the Hampton Roads Community Foundation, D. Baker Ames Charitable Foundation, Capital Companies, Dominion Resources, Enterprise Holdings Foundation, PRA Group, SunTrust, USAA, Wells Fargo, and the following municipalities and/or their Arts and Humanities Commissions: Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Virginia Beach.



Activity Calendar

- Wednesday, March 22, 2017

Jacox Rising-Stars
Music In Our Schools
Concert

Jacox Elementary
Norfolk, VA
6PM
Free and Open to
Jacox Families

- Saturday, March 25, 2017

Virginia Beach Rising-Stars
Virginia Beach All-City
Festival

Sandler Center
Virginia Beach, VA
7:30PM
Free and Open to
Rising-Stars Families &
Friends

- Friday, April 7, 2017

Rhythm Project All-Stars
Elizabeth City State
University Jazz Festival

Robinson Auditorium, Fine
Arts Center
Elizabeth City, NC
7:30PM
Ticketing Info TBD

Full Schedule at
www.RhythmProject.org

Virginia Arts Festival Rhythm Report

Volume 48

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Greetings Rhythm Project Supporters—

It's time for our winter and spring update on the many happenings throughout the Rhythm Project! Our big run of concerts is about to begin, so every band is working hard to polish their material and get everything ready to be performed. The All-Stars have been busy along the way; they just finished up a very successful day of performing *Rhythm Live!* back in mid-February. The student matinees were packed and full of excited children, and the atmosphere throughout the day was electric. The show was well-received and was not only a nice opportunity for the kids to meet some of the folks that support the Rhythm Project, but it was also important for our Jacox and Larchmont students to see the older pan players in action.

There will be no shortage of pan coming up in the next two months, so we invite everybody to make sure to attend one of our performances. The best way to see the Rhythm Project in its entirety is to find a spot on the lawn at the 24th Street stage on May 13th, and be a part of the crowd for Virginia International PANFest. Every one of our groups will take the stage at some point throughout the day, and it will be followed up by an incredible headlining artist, Leon "Foster" Thomas. It's sure to be a full day of sweet pan, with performers coming from all around the United States, and a few bands will even be joining us from the island of St. Croix!

Dave Longfellow

Paul Munzenrider

RP Director (757) 282-2823

RP Associate Director (757) 282-2815

Robert W. Cross

VAF Executive Director

Scott Jackson

VAF General Manager



Keep current with the
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Festival and the
Rhythm Project
online!
www.vafest.org



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Trini Travels



The Rhythm Project directors just returned from their trip to Trinidad for the annual Panorama competition, and it was another incredible season of music out on the island. We were especially excited this time to bring with us an alumnus of the RP All-Stars, Emily Barritt. Emily is currently a sophomore at Virginia Tech, and decided to make the trip and put her pan skills to the ultimate test. It was a great journey for her, as one can't help but soak up the very musical culture that exists in Trinidad around Carnival time.

As for the directors, we've had a great time sharing our experiences with every RP ensemble, and explaining a little bit about the carnival season. The bands now have a much better idea of what Panorama is all about, and some of the groups are even playing some of the current Trini soca music that we learned on our trip.

"I've been playing pan for almost a decade, but it wasn't until I finally made the trip, played in Panorama, and experienced the true culture of Trinidad and Tobago when everything I've learned over the years clicked. This trip showed me why I love the steel pan and has inspired me to continue to share its story."

— Emily Barritt



State of the Rhythm Project

Pan is all over the Hampton Roads area, thanks to the Virginia Arts Festival and our many supporters. The Rhythm Project is bigger than ever, reaching a wide variety of kids, and bringing many people together from different areas. Our program is designed to bring kids to the steel drum starting at a very young age, and continuing to be a presence alongside them as they grow. Take a look at our enrollment numbers and see the breakdown for yourself!

State of the Rhythm Project cont'd

2015-2016		2016-2017	
Rhythm Project All-Stars**	20	Rhythm Project All-Stars**	18
Portsmouth Rising-Stars**	20	Portsmouth Rising-Stars**	20
Virginia Beach Rising-Stars**	20	Virginia Beach Rising-Stars**	20
Salem High School**	25	Salem High School**	32
Ruffner Academy	8	Norfolk Rising-Stars	15
Larchmont Elementary* **	30	Larchmont Elementary* **	30
Young Terrace Rising-Stars* **	46	Young Terrace Rising-Stars* **	46
Governor's School for the Arts*	21	Jacox Elementary* **	46
		Governor's School for the Arts*	20
TOTAL	190	TOTAL	247

Ital. = part of the curriculum (school day) ; * = two separate groups ; ** = at capacity!

PANFest

This year marks the 15th annual Virginia International PANFest, and it's going to be another highly competitive year with bands traveling from all over to make it to Virginia Beach. For the Rhythm Project, it will be the first year for the Jacox Elementary Rising-Stars, and the 2nd year for the Portsmouth Rising-Stars. Our groups look forward to this event all year, and it's a great way to enjoy ourselves and appreciate all the



hard work that began back in September. We have another highly prestigious panel of judges lined up to adjudicate the competition and teach the workshop music to our visiting students. Our headliner, Leon "Foster" Thomas, is one of the most talented young pan artists in the world, and he's sure to put on an amazing show on Friday and Saturday evenings. His music brings tastes of jazz and calypso to the steel pan and we want to be sure to spread the word about this incredible, and free, concert at the Oceanfront.